

**South River Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-00-05**

Date Prepared: January 22, 2002

**Suicide Creek Culvert Replacement
Decision Documentation**

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the construction of a concrete bridge on BLM Road No. 29-8-2.0, where it crosses Suicide Creek in T. 29 S., R. 8 W., NW¹/₄SW¹/₄, Section 1, W.M. The bridge will replace two large culverts that are located in a BLM easement across privately-owned lands and which have been identified for replacement by Field Office and District engineering personnel because of the risk of failure in the near term. The culverts have also been identified as a barrier to upstream and downstream passage by fish and other aquatic fauna.

A temporary bypass road will be constructed to provide access to residential properties and private forest lands located above the project site. The bypass road will be removed upon completion of the project.

Bridge design and construction will incorporate Best Management Practices from Appendix D (p. 134-136) of the *Roseburg District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP June, 1995). Among the project design features to be implemented:

- C Design of the bridge to allow passage of a theoretical 100-year flood event.
- C Restriction of in-stream construction activities to the period between July 1 and September 15, during low summer stream flow, consistent with conditions of the General Authorization of the Oregon Division of State Lands, and under permit from the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- C Diversion of stream flow during construction activities, and minimization of in-stream equipment operation.
- C Placement of an absorbent boom downstream of the project site, prior to commencement of work, to contain potential spillage of any petroleum products.
- C Endhaul of waste material to an authorized upland disposal site.
- C Placement of rip-rap for stream bank armoring and protection of bridge abutments.
- C Revegetation of disturbed stream banks with native grasses.
- C Pressure washing or steam cleaning of excavation and earth-moving equipment prior to move-in on the project site in order to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed.

Rationale for the Decision:

This project was analyzed under Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the South River Watershed Restoration EA. Its implementation will meet the objective of restoring fish passage and the need for replacing the culverts that are at risk of failure in the near term. Alternative 2, the no action alternative, would not meet the identified objective or need.

The replacement of the culverts with a bridge will not result in any undue environmental degradation. The project is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives contained in the ROD/RMP (pp. 20-21). Specifically, the project will aid in the maintenance and restoration of in-stream flows; maintenance and restoration of spatial and temporal connectivity in the watershed; maintenance and restoration of the natural sediment regime; and maintenance and restoration of aquatic habitat. The project is also consistent with the management objective “To preclude stream crossings from being a direct source of sediment to streams thus minimizing water quality degradation and provide unobstructed movement for aquatic fauna.”(ROD/RMP, p. 134).

The project site is located in an easement on private lands. As a consequence, there are no provisions or requirements for pre-disturbance surveys for Survey and Manage species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified an array of soil series within a set of geographic quadrangles that represent potentially suitable habitat for Kincaid’s lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus var. kincaidii*), listed as a Federally-threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The project area is within the identified geographic range, but the requisite soil types are absent. As a consequence, the site is not considered to be suitable habitat, the species is not expected to be present and surveys are not required.

The project site is not located in suitable habitat for the threatened northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) or threatened marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratum*), nor within ¼-mile of any owl activity center or potential murrelet habitat. As a consequence, the project would have no effect on either species.

Suicide Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for the Oregon coast coho salmon, listed as a Federally-threatened species. The effects of culvert replacement and bridge construction on Oregon Coast coho salmon and designated critical habitat are primarily derived from sediment generated by stream bank disturbance and in-stream activities associated with the project. These effects were determined “likely to adversely affect” listed fish and designated critical habitat, and were consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Effects on essential fish habitat (EFH) are considered substantively the same as those for the coho salmon and its habitat. The NMFS findings are addressed in the August 8, 2001, Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead. This opinion sets forth Terms and Conditions in conjunction with authorization of Incidental Take. This project is consistent with the terms and conditions of the Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion.

No issues were identified by any local or tribal governments, State agencies, or other Federal agencies. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from June 28, 2000, through July 28, 2000. Comments were received from one organization. These comments did not constitute new information or identify any issues not already considered and addressed in the South River Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*.

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with implementation monitoring objectives and requirements for Water and Soils, and Fish Habitat resources contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 195-198).

Protest and Appeals Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in the Roseburg, Oregon, *News-Review*

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date